

70 1109.

4474 C

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of

Shankil in the Town of *Lurgan*,

Upon *Wednesday* the 18th Day of *December*.

A
S E R M O N



To the Church of

Spoken in the Town of Llangan,

Upon Wednesday the 18th Day of December.

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of

Shankil in the Town of *Lurgan*,

Upon *Wednesday* the 18th Day of *December*.

Being the Day appointed for Fasting and
Humiliation for the Sins of this Nation, in
order to render ourselves Objects of Divine
Mercy, and thereby to remove from us the
Evils of Rebellion and foreign Wars.

BY *K*
RICHARD BARTON B. D.

Published at the earnest Request of the Parishoners.

D U B L I N :

Printed for GEORGE and ALEXANDER EWING
at the *Angel* and *Bible* in *Dame-street*, Booksellers.

MDCCLXVI.

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of
St. Andrew in the Town of Lurgan,
Upon Wednesday the 7th of December.

Advertisement.

THE Writer of this Sermon does not think it necessary upon this Occasion to settle all the differences between the Account given in the second Book of *Samuel* and the first Book of *Chronicles*, concerning the Action of numbering the People, lest the principal Design should not be attended to, whilst these Particulars might be under Consideration ; but he refers the curious Reader to the pains-taking Commentators.

He has some Quotations and Notes in the Manuscript closely relative to many Parts of this Discourse, which for the same Reason he chooses to omit in the printed Copy.



D U R L I N .
Printed for George and Alexander H. W. in
at the Angel and Bible in Dame Street, Booksellers.

M DCC XLVI.

A

S E R M O N, &c.

2 S A M. XXIV. 14.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great Strait; let US fall now into the Hands of the Lord (for his Mercies are great) and let me not fall into the Hand of Man.

MY Brethren, I have chosen this historical Passage of Scripture to be discoursed upon as containing many Things not unsuitable to our present Circumstances. Here is a Calamity fallen upon a Nation for the Sins of the Prince and the People; here is a dreadful Execution of it to the Destruction of seventy thousand Persons; here is the Repentance of Sinners and the Repentance of God himself; human Sin, and divine Wrath; human Sorrow and the Ceasing of divine Resentment, and Thansgiving to God for it. All these are pretty plainly set forth in the Story, to hear which is worth your while.

And again the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, Go number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, go now throw all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people. And Joab said unto the king,

A 2

now

now the Lord thy God add unto the People, (how many soever they be) an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the King may see it: But why doth my Lord the King delight in this thing? Notwithstanding, the King's Word prevailed against Joab, and against the Captains of the Host: And Joab and the Captains of the Host went out from the Presence of the King, to number the People of Israel. And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the City that lieth in the midst of the River of Gad, and towards Jazer. Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Taktim-bodshi; and they came to Dan-iaan, and about to Zidon, and came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the Cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: And they went out to the South of Judab, even to Beer-sheba. So when they had gone through all the Land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine Months and twenty Days. And Joab gave up the Sum of the Number of the People unto the King: And there were in Israel eight hundred Thousand valiant Men that drew the Sword; and the Men of Judab were five hundred Thousand Men. And David's Heart smote him after that he had numbered the People; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: And now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the Iniquity of thy Servant; for I have done very foolishly. For when David was up in the Morning, the Word of the Lord came unto the Prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; chuse thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of Famine come unto thee in thy Land? or wilt thou flee three Months before thine Enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three Days Pestilence in thy Land? now advise, and see what Answer I shall return to him that sent me. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great straight: Let us fall now into the Hand of the Lord, (for his Mercies are great) and let me not fall into the Hand of Man. So the

the Lord sent a Pestilence upon Israel, from the Morning even to the Time appointed: And there died of the People from Dan even to Beer-sheba, seventy thousand Men. And when the Angel stretched out his Hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the Evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed the People, it is enough: Stay now thine Hand. And the Angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the Angel that smote the People, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: But these Sheep, what have they done? Let thine Hand I pray thee, be against me, and against my Father's House. And Gad came that Day to David, and said unto him, go up, rear an Altar unto the Lord, in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the King and his Servants coming on toward him: And Araunah went out and bowed himself before the King on his Face upon the Ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my Lord the King come to his servant? And David said, to buy the threshing-floor of thee to build an Altar unto the Lord, that the Plague may be stayed from the People. And Araunah said unto David, let my Lord the King take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: Behold, here be oxen for Burnt-Sacrifice, and Threshing-Instruments, and other Instruments of the Oxen for Wood. All these things did Araunah, as a King, give unto the King: And Araunah said unto the King, the Lord thy God accept thee. And the King said unto Araunah, nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a Price: Neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God, of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the Threshing-Floor and the Oxen, for fifty Shekels of Silver. And David built there an Altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings, and Peace-offerings: So the Lord was entreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from Israel.

Observe that the Sin is here set down, *and David's heart smote him, after that he had numbered the People.* The numbering of the People therefore was the Sin. The Story does not inform us wherein this Action was sinful, but certainly it must have been highly so, to bring down such heavy Resentment upon a Nation as the Destruction of seventy thousand Persons.

We are led in a good Measure to the Knowledge of the Sinfulness of this Action by a Passage in *Exodus c. 30.*

When thou takest the Sum of the Children of Israel after their Number, then shall they give every Man a Ransom for his Soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there be no Plague amongst them when thou numberest them.

But *David* seems to have numbered them without demanding the Payment of this Ransom. This was robbing God, and it was a considerable Sum. For this Money was a Testimony of their Gratitude to God ; who graciously accepted this Acknowledgment of him, and spared their Lives which by their Sins they had forfeited : this being a Propitiation for them, because it purchased propitiatory Sacrifices to be offered on their behalf. During the Time of the Tabernacle it was applied to the Use of the Tabernacle, afterwards to the Temple.

In order to judge better of the Sinfulness of this Action, consider the Nature of the *Jewish* Government. It was a *Theocracy*, that is, God was their Governor in a more peculiar Manner than of any other Nation. He allowed frequent Intercourses between himself and his People not allowed to other Nations. They had upon many Occasions Informations of Events and Directions of Conduct in extraordinary Emergencies by Urim and Thummim, and by the Prophets ; as in the present Story the divine Intention was conveyed to *David* by *Gad* a Prophet and Seer. And *David* in the Course of his Life was well acquainted with this, having been singularly in the Care
of

of Providence. Since therefore God himself was the true King of the *Jews*, and *David* only a Deputy, *David* should have consulted him by those religious Methods which God allowed and he himself was experienced in; but he numbered the People without this, and therein offended God.

The Design of *David* in numbering the People was therefore vain and irreligious: And this may be further collected from the Account which *Joab* the Captain of his Host returned. For he gave up the Sum of the Number of the People unto the King: *and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant Men that drew the Sword, and the Men of Judah were five hundred thousand.* It seems from hence that it was the Number of fighting Men which *David* wanted to know; in this, forgetting his youthful Religion. When he was but a Stripling, and combated with *Goliath*, he could with Confidence declare, that *all the Assembly*, that is, the Army of the *Philistines* as well as the *Israelites*, and *all the Earth* should know, that the *Lord saveth not with Sword and Spear.* But in this Action of numbering the People he did not bear in Mind his former Religion; he forgot the Lord who saved him from the Lion, who saved him from the Giant, who saved him from a persecuting King and a rebellious Son; and like the pagan Monarchs of the World he counted his Numbers and trusted in human Strength. Had not the divine Chastisement restrained this King, who knows but we should have him in a short Time, invading the Territories of neighbouring Princes, and sending Messages of Pride and Irreligion like that of *Sennacherib* to *Hezekiah*. But God in his mercy rebuked him, and prevented much greater Wickedness by chastizing him, in lessening those Numbers in which he so much trusted. For a Pestilence slew seventy thousand of them. — Dreadful Calamity! And was this the Crime of the Prince alone for which the People were punished?

Infidels may ask this Question, in order to discredit the History, and lessen the Authority of the Bible. And we answer : It may, or may not ; and yet the divine Conduct be unblameable ; there being no temporal Chastisement that can be inflicted on human Nature, which the Sufferers upon proper Consideration and Sense of their own Demerit should not allow to be just. But let us enquire whether this was not a Sin in the People ?

It was of old remarked by a Roman Poet, that *whatever Faults the Grecian Princes committed, the Grecian Subjects suffered for them* : but there is a System of Laws not reckoned the least wise of Laws of human Contrivance which says, *the King can do no Wrong*. For he is supposed to stand in need of Advice in all Cases, his Advisers therefore to bad Things are Criminals ; and his Advisers being Members of the State, and consequently his Subjects, and they themselves influenced by others, those Acts which are called the Acts of the King, (all public Orders being in his Name) are notwithstanding that, in their true Nature, the Acts of the Community, and the criminal Nature of them applicable to the Whole.

This might have been the Case in the historical Passage before us ; the People might have boasted of their Numbers and Strength ; and they who had the Ear of the King might have endeavoured to have influenced him to number the People, although *Joab* strove to dissuade him from it : which helps us to a good meaning for the Expression in the 1st Book of *Chronicles* where this Story is also told (*and Satan provoked David to number Israel*) *Satan* in Hebrew signifies an Adversary or an Enemy, hence our great spiritual Enemy is called *Satan*. The Enemy meant in this Passage is probably those Persons who attended the King and had his Ear (*Joab* who was his Friend in this had it not) they might be influenced by the People and they influenced the King.

But

But before I proceed further in this Subject, I must entreat you, not to imagine that any remarks that may be made here are intended to point out to you, by application, any part of our State as contributing more to our present Evils than another. Supposing that we could know the Authors of our present Calamities, this is not a Time to accuse and to divide, but to forgive and to unite. The principal design of this Day's meeting, and of this Discourse is, to make every Man think himself a *Sinner*, and a *principal* cause of our Misery; That by national repentance we may, as a Nation, become objects of divine mercy: Therefore to the Point: *Joab* has been just mentioned as being a Friend to *David* in trying to dissuade him from numbering the People; His expostulation as related in the *Chronicles* is; *Why will my Lord be a cause of trespass in Israel*: From hence we should infer, that *Israel* shared in the Guilt and therefore deserved the Punishment. For whether *David* led them into Sin, or they him, still they Sinned. If *David* numbered them without demanding the Tribute of *Ransom* due to God, they knew the divine Law, and should have payed it; they knew the Punishment denounced against the Transgression of this Law was a Plague; they knew that *David* could not dispense with the Obligation to obey a divine Law; they knew that if there was a Repugnance between the Command of their King and the Command of their God, that *they ought to obey GOD rather than Man*. And yet they sinned against all these circumstances of Knowledge; They were therefore highly Sinful, they were therefore greatly Punished; their Punishment being a Plague which the Law had denounced; and *David* perhaps chusing it for that Reason. For since he and his People did not obey the preceptory Part of the Law, he and his People becoming Penitents would shew their disposition of obedience in submitting to the penal Part of it.

The

The introduction to this Story informs us that the People had Sinned. *For the Text says, the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel: therefore Israel had Sinned to deserve this Anger.* For God does not punish the Innocent: Then follows, *and he moved David against them, or David was moved:* (For it is the Language of the Bible to say that God does things because he is the supreme Cause, when other inferior Beings are the real moral Agents, as might be proved by many Passages.) *GOD moved David against them* is therefore the Same with *David was moved* against them, that is, by *Satan*, that is, by evil Advisers, his People, his Subjects, who drew him into the Sin for which the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. This Language plainly implies that *Israel* had Sinned; The Order in which it lies also denotes that the Sin of the People was previous to that of *David*. For his Anger was kindled against *Israel* before *David* was seduced. It also seems to imply that since the Numbering of the People was the Sin into which *David* was seduced, the vain Disposition to be numbered was the previous Sin of the People?

This being the Case therefore, that the People sinned, and greatly so, in acting plainly against the Law of God, how comes it, that *David* seems to take the whole Guilt upon himself?

To clear this, it may be observed, that almost every eminent Person and thing in the *Jewish* Scriptures has some typical relation to the Gospel State of things, And that *David* is in this respect a very extraordinary Instance; being that person in whose line of Descent the Saviour of Mankind should be born. We may therefore suppose that *David* in this passage of History does take to himself a great deal more of the Crime of the Numbering of the People than belonged to him, or does indeed seem to take the whole Guilt upon himself- 1 Chron. 21. *Is it not I that commanded the People to be numbered? Even I it is that have Sinned*

Sinned and done Evil indeed, but as for these Sheep what have they done. Let thine hand I pray thee O Lord my GOD, be on me, and on my Father's House, but not on thy People that they should be Plagued. He expresseth himself thus, not because he was the only Sinner or the Greatest, but because this state of Mind became him as a Penitent, and made him truly Typical of that great Person and Saviour who although innocent of all sort of Crime died for all Offenders as if he had been guilty of all their Offences; for he took all their Guilt upon him. One of his latest Prayers was not unlike that of *David*. Luke 23. 34. *Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*—*These Sheep what have they done,* says *David*.

I believe it would be improper to argue from these Words of our Saviour, that the *Jews* who persecuted him to Death, did not commit a Crime in doing so. Nothing can be fairly concluded from them, but the great Compassion of the dying Mediator, and his great desire to make them innocent in the Sight of God; them, for whom, and by whom he was going to suffer Death. So in the other instance before us which seems to typify this, the People were offenders although *David's* great compassion in his Repentance makes him take their Guilt upon him.

Thus *David* and his People sinned in the Action of numbering the People; I wish there was not something like this Sin of the *Jews* (for such I will now call it and not the Sin of *David* alone) even in our Nation at this present time as well as others. What is so common as to number the Protestants of this Kingdom, seemingly in order to Place more confidence in the Strength and Numbers of Men than in the Providence of God and the Justice of a Cause? Did we strive to excel in purity of Life and Manners as well as of Doctrine and Faith, we should thereby be more strengthened, because the Lord would be on our side, than by an increase of Numbers of Protesters against Popery.

But

But we do not strive to excel in Goodness: Our present miseries and this Day's humiliation should teach us this. Give me leave to tell you, having too good reason for knowledge, what kind of Protestants have lately gone into the Army from these Parts. They are shamefully ignorant, even of the Principles for which they are hired to Fight; And the Generality of them are so far from knowing the Purity of the Protestant faith compared with the Corruptions of Popery; the Blessings of spiritual and civil Liberty compared with Superstition and Tyranny, that they can hardly describe the Walls, or count the Windows of the Buildings, wherein they should have attended the Protestant worship. It is to be hoped, that the Military Discipline which obligeth them to attend divine Service, may give them some improvement of Christian knowledge, but their present ignorance is deplorable.

Since this has been mentioned, which nothing but Christian Charity and compassion should have extorted, let me assign some cause of it, in hopes that you who hear will as far as you can, endeavour to remedy it in regard to another Generation.

The Parent is the Greatest and first cause of this. The infancy of Life, which is the Time for receiving that Instruction which is most likely to stick close to the Heart, is entirely in Subjection to the Parent. That is the Time for Schooling; That is the Time for forming the Mind and Manners: But alas! those Schools are almost empty which should be full; and every circumstance of Life is reckoned of more importance than Instruction.

The fountains of knowledge were opened to Mankind by the Reformers at the Expence of their Blood; And they seem to have declared to the human Race in the Language of *Isaiab* c. 12. 3. *With joy shall ye now draw water out of the Wells of Salvation*; like Moses they have driven away the Shepherds who hindered the Thirsty to drink at the Wells of Salvation, so that

that Women and Children may now draw Water for themselves. For the Bible which before that time was only read by those who were skilled in dead Languages, may now be read by all Persons who know the living Language of their Country. But they, who are not taught to read the Language which they speak, can profit little by the Opening of the Wells of Salvation, wanting the Means to raise the Water.

The Children of Papists who have now the Benefit of *Charter Schools* (the most excellent Charity that ever was designed, and which will tend more to the Increase of the Protestant Religion and strength of the Government than all other legislative Acts united) will certainly out-do the Children of Protestant Parents, who shamefully neglect the early Instruction of their Offspring. A Philosopher of old used to cry from the Tops of Houses, *educate your Children*: It should now be shouted in all Places, that they may *bear who have Ears to bear*. For it is scarce possible that any pains in the adult State can compensate for this early Neglect: The excuses for this can not be examined here, but they are for the most Part idle and frivolous, although they are very pernicious in their consequences.

To return therefore to the Subject of this Discourse — There is a choice of three Evils proposed to David for the Sin in numbering the People.

Shall seven Years of famine come unto thee in thy Land? Or wilt thou flee three Months before thine Enemies, while they pursue thee? Or that there be three days pestilence in thy Land? David answers in one respect as every Man would, *I am in a great strait*: For the Evils were all dreadful; Yet beginning to come to a Sense of Sin: He religiously determines, *let us fall now into the Hands of the Lord* (for his Mercies are great) and *let me not fall into the Hand of Man*.

Observe, that in this answer David first says, *let US fall now into the hands of the Lord*, meaning the People as well as himself, and then, *let ME not fall into*

into the Hand of Man. So, the Hebrew Text has it, and our Translation keeps it.

From this I would Remark not only that the People were criminal in the Sight of God in this Action of numbering the People, as well as *David* when he speaks plurally; but also that *David* being now sensible of his own Share of the Sin, does like a true Penitent, not expecting Mercy upon his own account, join himself with others, hoping upon theirs to receive the divine Favour, *let us fall now into the Hands of the Lord.* Yet again, as a true Penitent should always aggravate rather than lessen his Crime, he speaks as if he alone was a Sinner, *Let me not fall into the Hand of Man.* It may further be remarked that his sorrowful State of Mind was such, that not presuming upon the Favour of God on his own Account, he does not say particularly of himself, *Let me fall into the Hand of the Lord*, that favours too much of Confidence for a Sinner; but as more modest and therein more religious, he deprecates the contrary, *Let me not fall into the Hand of Man.* The Beauty of which, were it allowable to spoil it by a Paraphrase, might be spoiled thus.

I am grievously perplexed, being sensible of my own Demerit as well as of my People who encouraged me to Sin, and being obliged to chuse one of three Evils, the least of which is almost too heavy to be born. All Evils are in the Hand of God (the Treasures of his Wrath) even those wherein he useth human Instruments. Although my People have sinned they may have Mercy, I have sinned more and have no Title to it. I only am the Sinner and they are Innocent; My God lay the whole Guilt upon me, but inable me to bear thy Chastisement. There is Mercy in the Choice, for thy Chastisements are Mercy. What I cannot hope to obtain upon my own Account, let me hope upon Account of my People, thine they are, thy Sheep, O Shepherd of Israel. For their sake lessen the Punishment,—remove it my God — lay it upon me — this I cannot bear — the other I cannot

cannot hope; for Sin calls for Judgment. Thy Judgments are before me — dreadful Choice. I know the Cruelty of Man, I know the Mercy of God,—the one I dread, the other I do not deserve,—let my People, thy People O God fall into thine Hands, and let me upon their Account partake of Mercy.—Thou wilt not let me suffer instead of them, let me share with them in Pain. Thy merciful Chastisements are Mercies too good for me. I deserve the greatest, I dread the least. Yet the Persecution which I have suffered from Men, rests so painfully upon my Mind, that although I dare not aspire directly to the Mercies of God, yet O my God, let me not fall into the Hand of Man.

If in this Paraphrase there may seem something Apparently contradictory, as that the People sinned in the opinion of David, and yet that he alone sinned; it is no more than what is natural to a Person in an Agitation of Mind, at so dreadful a Choice as was laid before him, by a Messenger from an offended God. They are such Sentiments as should seem likely to arise suddenly, and by Starts, in the Mind of a Person affectionate to his People, penitent to his God and affrighted at his Judgments. Sentiments more calmly connected and with Strictness of reasoning would be less natural; yet David does at last religiously determine the Choice: And a Pestilence destroyed Seventy Thousand Persons. Therefore the Truth is, David and the People sinned; David and the People repented. Because they sinned, a Pestilence destroyed Sinners; because they repented, a merciful God repented also, and ordered the destroying Angel to stop. *It is enough, stay now thine Hand.*

This is a comfortable Circumstance for us to consider at this Time. The three days of Pestilence were shortned by the divine Mercy; for the Chastisements of God being for the good of the Creatures chastened, whenever they repent his Wrath ceaseth, because the Reason ceaseth.

And

And David built an Altar, and offered burnt offerings and Peace offerings upon it to the Lord; so the Lord was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from Israel. Thus the Calamity ended, David and the People returned to God, and God returned to them; they are now in a State of Grace and divine Favour. And thus we will leave them in that Condition in which all nations should desire to be, and come to our own Circumstances, hoping to Profit by so useful an Example; that if we be at present like the *Jews* in Sin and Calamity, we may also soon be like them in Repentance and the Favour of God.

The religious meeting upon this Day is intended to humble ourselves before God for this Purpose. May he who is willing to change the stony Heart, and soften the most stubborn Affections, inable every one of us to be so truly Penitent as to depart in the divine Favour. And if we cannot humanly hope this of every Person, in every religious Assembly upon this general occasion, let us *Hope even against Hope*, as *Abraham* once did, knowing all things to be possible to God; or at least hope that the righteous few may supplicate for these Nations, and save them from——the Tongue falters when it attempts to utter our Miseries——save them from——*Destruction* in every formidable Shape, two powerful Enemies abroad, and one more dreadful at home——two foreign Wars, and a domestic Rebellion. Kindred armed against kindred, Subject against Subject, and the dearest of all Relations, the Brotherhood of Christianity destroyed. For Christian is armed against Christian, Protestant against Protestant. Can Religion be the Cause of so much confusion? Religion is ever innocent of Mischief, but Superstition is a prolific Parent of Bloodshedding Feuds. Pagan Rome did not Slaughter as many Christians in Ten Persecutions, as Popish Rome has done in less than three Centuries. So much worse in this Respect is a false Belief than not to believe at all; so much more humane is natural Morality than corrupted Revelation,

lation, so much better to be an Infidel than a Bigot in Superstition.

My Brethren, think not that this Remark reflects upon the ways of God, or his merciful Dispensations of Grace to Mankind. *Let God be just and every Man a Lyar.*

Christianity is, in its Nature, most excellently adapted to procure universal Peace, by spreading universal Charity. Although the Preacher of it says, *I am not come to send Peace but a Sword*; he certainly speaks not of the Nature of true Religion, but of the consequences of it in a corrupt World, which would not embrace it in Purity: And not being embraced in Purity, it indeed sets a Man at Variance against his Father; and the Daughter against her Mother, and a Man's Foes are they of his own Household. This has been found true in Fact. It is also true of all other things which are excellent in their Nature, when corrupted they are the worst. The Violet is perhaps one of the most sweet-smelling of Flowers, yet putrified is the most fetid of filthy things.

Human Nature cultivated and improved by true Morality, that is, by Christianity, is little less than the Angelic; corrupted and debased in Vice it is inferior to the Brutal World. But the Purity of Christianity is the Perfection of Morals: This exalts human Nature: This raises it to the Dignity it once lost: This promotes it to the Class of Angels, and fits it for the Society of Heaven: This was the Morality the Son of God practised; This is therefore perfect Morality, since the Deity is all Perfection: To endeavour to Practise this is to aspire to the likeness of God; it is to aspire to Heaven, and to enjoy Happiness with him.

Let the Revelation of God therefore stand clear of all Imputation of the Calamities of Mankind; but let the perverseness of Men corruptly interpreting the divine Will, and faintly practising his noble Precepts,

answer for all the Wars, Massacres and rebellions in the Christian World.

We are now therefore come close to the Point: The Source of our evils is discovered. *Sin* is the Cause of all our Calamities.

Moral evil is connected with natural Evil: They almost go hand in hand together. Sooner or later chastisement overtakes the Sinner. Had *Adam* never sinned, we had never known Sicknefs, Poverty, War, or Death. But he sinned, and we his posterity also Sin. Hence Armies of Distempers that hourly invade Mankind, hence repining Poverty, voluptuous Wealth, destructive Tyranny, *War and Rebellion*; Hence a dreadful Night-Piece of human Miseries which Ink is not black enough to Paint.

But my Brethren, let us not declaim without the Authority of the Bible. Hear therefore St. *James*. Put you the Question, *from whence come Wars and fightings among Christians?* The Apostle answers: *Come they not hence, even of your Lusts that war in your Members.*

Lust is a Scripture word which stands for all Vice: *Vice* therefore is the Cause of *War*.

Should we not then seriously lay this to Heart, at a Time in which we scarce know how to turn ourselves, having no point in the Compass that points to Security. Our Enemies lie on every side of us and within our Bosom. If we look for Alliances; Alas! How precarious are they? And with what difficulty obtained? They who are enemies to our Peace have their Ambassadors to oppose us in all Applications. Let us therefore look up to Heaven, where neither Bribes nor the false Rhetoric of mankind have any Admittance. The honestest Prayer is there preferred to the most eloquent. Or rather whilst we wish to approach the Throne of Grace, let us with Abashment look from it. The repenting Publican would not lift up so much as his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Let

Let us leave the Pharisaical Prayer to our superstitious Enemies: They profess themselves the Keepers of the Keys of Grace; And open the Temple only to their own Votaries: We, although excluded by their unmerciful Decrees, will stand afar off and smiting upon our Breasts with an honest sense of Sin, will hope to return from the House of Prayer, rather justified than they.

Thus let every Protestant repent and pray like the Publican: Let every Protestant think of himself alone, and not comparatively charge other persons with contributing more to our Misfortunes. If there have been Factions, let us forget them. If there be different denominations of Protestants, let us all now unite in one Cause, with one Name.

Our best *zeal* is shewn not in calumniating each other, not in comparative righteousness or pharisaical Pride (God *I thank thee that I am not as other Men are—or as this Publican*) but in real grief for Sin, and internal examination of the Springs of Immorality, a Loathing of ourselves for moral Foulness, and the Leprosy of Vice. The Protestant Prayer now should be like that of *David*, *Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed, but as for these Sheep what have they done?* we are sure that we have offended God grievously; For our punishment is grievous. Of the three Evils proposed to *David*, what he dreaded most, is most likely to fall upon us. *To flee before our Enemies* would be a choquing thing. And, if an honest *Repentance* does not prevent, it may be our Case.

It is vain to boast of national Bravery and gallant Troops; The Battle is not always to the Strong: What is vulgarly attributed to human Strength, is the Arm of the Lord. If the Lord be with us, we need not be *afraid tho' an Host rise up against us*, and if the Lord be against us, *we may flee although no Man pursueth*.

The World may talk of Bravery in what stile they please, but true *Courage* is always founded upon Reason,

son, and true Reason is *Religion*. A good Cause maketh a stout Heart, and the Righteous are bold as a Lion. Our Cause is certainly good, were our Hearts honest in embracing it: To defend the Purity of Christianity against the Corruption of it; the Liberty of human Nature against the Inslaving of it; *Spiritual and Civil Liberty* is our Cause. But if our Sins stand in the Way of our Petitions to Heaven, we shall be deprived of both. The Freedom and Religion of three Kingdoms depend perhaps upon this Day's Repentance. Let every Protestant therefore Repent, as if the Whole depended upon his repentance alone. And let him address himself to God with an honest Mind accompanying the Sense of these Words. Ezra. 9. *O my GOD I am ashamed and blush to lift up my Face to thee my GOD, for my iniquities are increased over my Head: And my trespass is grown up into Heaven.* If the Heart joins sincerely in these Words, there is one already in Heaven to solicit for the Petitioner, who has made full satisfaction for every Sin; And who will also recommend the Next Petition. Jer. 10. 24. *O Lord correct me, but with Judgment, not in thine Anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* Then may the Lord say, to those who are Instruments in his Hands to destroy us Sinners. *It is enough, stay now thine Hand.*

Thus is it in the Power of every Man almost to save a Nation, since it is in the Power of every Man to be sincere in repentance. Were there ten righteous Persons in *Sodom*, *Sodom* would have been saved. Let us therefore all do as much as lies in our Power, which at least is, for every one to reform *one*; Then may we *all* become Objects of divine Mercy, and avert the dreadful Evils of War; That this may be our Case, may our gracious God, *the Lord GOD of Sabaoth* * grant to us, his distressed Petitioners, who are now before him, *Weeping, Fasting, and Praying.*

* Sabaoth. heb. Hosts.

What follows was added to this Discourse when it was preached a second Time, to wit, the Sunday after the Fast.

MY Brethren, a few words more. Having now preached this Sermon a Second time to you, I am not averse to the Publication of it since you earnestly request it. And although I might possibly chuse some worthy Person in the State, of dignity and disposition to be its Patron; Yet having no other motive in Printing, than I had in preaching it, except as to Extent, (it being for more general Information) *I dedicate it to G.O.D.* If almost the meanest Actions of human Nature should be directed to heaven (*Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do.*) Much more should the very Acts of Religion, done in obedience to legislative Appointment. You have here one part of the Persuasion to Spiritual and civil Liberty delivered in Sermons for some Months past.

If this Discourse does encourage the Protestant Brethren to repent of their Sins, to love one another, to unite in the Defence of moral and civil Liberty against superstition and Tyranny, in the Defence of the present Constitution, in opposition to the Invaders of it; My Design is answered; And I wish those who shall read it the Grace of God to accompany them, which I hope the Writer had.

Let us ever bear in Mind the Christian Motto. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another. We are a Spiritual House, built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets: Love is the Cement of it: By this all the Building fitly framed together groweth into an holy Temple; By this it shall stand uninjured; Plots and Armadas, can not destroy it: They have already tryed and they have been defeated. I am not hurt but dashed upon (non Lædor, Allidor)* was an Inscription upon a Medal

Sal of Queen *Elizabeth*, the Device being a Castle upon a Rock in the Sea. May our present Sovereign be as successful against his Enemies, as that glorious Queen was against hers. His Enemies, are our Enemies, his Cause is our Cause; he fights for the Preservation of Liberty and Religion, and we pray and fight for him, because he is the Guardian of both. Let us therefore *all* act united, as if we were one Body actuated by one Soul.

One or unity is very Mysterious. Millions in Numbers owe their existence to *Unity*, and He, by whom all things exist, is *One*. The Design of Christianity is to bring all Nations into one; The Bible expresses it, *to gather together in one, the Children of GOD which are scattered abroad*. *One* is the Characteristic of Religion as well as the Attribute of the Deity. Upon this Occasion therefore we ought to be—we are—*One*: *One* in repentance for Sin, *One* in affection for pure Religion and honest Loyalty; *One* in our wishes, *One* in our Actions; *One* in the House of Prayer; *One* in the Field of Battle; *One* in endeavouring to preserve to our lawful Prince an earthly Crown, in *one* Hope that every *one* of us shall obtain an Heavenly Crown. That this may be our final Blessing, is the Prayer of your Brother in Christ and fellow Labourer in the glorious Defence of *Spiritual and Civil Liberty*.

10 FE 58

F I N I S.